

Missionary

TESTIMONIES TO MISSIONS

The work of giving the Gospel to all people "to the uttermost parts of the earth," is the supreme work of **the Church**. Nothing else approaches it in magnitude or importance. Yet the Church has been accused of playing at Missions; and there is certainly an appearance of truth in the accusation.

Some members in our churches are opposed to missions, and many more are indifferent to this cause. One reason of this is that people are not informed as to what has been accomplished in missionary work; and another reason is that many are misled by false reports put in circulation by people who were ignorant of that whereof they affirmed, or else willfully put false statements in circulation. It is my purpose in this article to present some testimonies from competent witnesses to show that missions are not a failure, but a grand success.

The following testimony is, to me, very impressive. It is from "The Missionary Review of the World," January, 1888, and was furnished by Rev. Jacob Chamberlain, M. D., of Madanapelle, India. After speaking of the opening of a free reading room in that city in which lectures on the Bible were given, he says:

"From the beginning the room was always crowded on these occasions by intelligent heathen. At the close of one of these Bible lectures by Dr. Chamberlain, a Brahmin—one of the best educated in the place, not a convert—arose and asked permission to say a few words. In a neat address he urged upon his fellow-citizens the importance of availing themselves of the advantages offered for their intellectual and moral advancement, and in conclusion gave the following remarkable testimony to the Christian Scriptures:

"Behold that mango tree on yonder roadside! Its fruit is approaching to ripeness. Bears it that fruit for itself or its own profit? From the moment the first ripe fruits turn their yellow sides toward the morning sun until the last mango is pelted off, it is assailed with showers of sticks and stones from boys and men, and every passer-by, until it stands bereft of leaves, with branches knocked off, bleeding from many a broken twig; and piles of stones underneath, and clubs and sticks lodged in its boughs, are the only trophies of its joyous crop of fruit. Is it discouraged? Does it cease to bear fruit? Does it say, 'If I am barren no one will pelt me, and I shall live in peace'? Not at all. The next season the budding leaves, the beautiful flowers, the tender fruit, again appear. Again it is pelted and broken, and wounded, but goes on bearing, and children's children pelt its branches and enjoy its fruit.

"That is a type of these missionaries. I have watched them well, and have seen what they are. What do they come to this country for? What tempts them to leave their parents, friends and country, and come to this, to them an unhealthy climate? Is it for gain or for profit that they come? Some of us country clerks in government offices receive more salary than they.

Is it for an easy life? See how they work, and then tell me. No; they seek, like the mango tree, to bear fruit for the benefit of others; and this, too, though treated with contumely and abuse from those they are benefiting.

"Now look at this missionary! He came here a few years ago, leaving all, and seeking only our good. He was met with cold looks and suspicious glances, and was shunned, avoided and maligned. He sought to talk with us of what he told us was the matter of most importance in heaven or earth, and we would not listen. But he was not discouraged. He started a dispensary, and we said, 'Let the Pariahs take his medicine, we won't'; but in the times of our sickness and distress and fear, we had to go to him, and he heard us. We complained if he walked through our Brahmin streets; but ere long, when our wives and daughters were in sickness and anguish, we went and begged him to come, even into our inner apartments; and he came, and our wives and daughters now smile upon us in health. Has he made any money by it? Even the cost of the medicine has not been returned to him.

"And now, in spite of our opposition, he has bought this site, and built this beautiful room, and furnished it with the choicest of lore in many languages, and put in it newspapers and periodicals which were inaccessible to us before, but which help us now to keep up with the world around us, and understand passing events; and he has placed here tables to write on, and chairs to sit on, and lamps for us to read and write by in the evening; and what does he get for all this? Does he make money by this free reading-room? Why, we don't even pay for the lamp-oil consumed by night as we read.

"Now, what is it makes him do all this for us? It is his Bible. I have looked into it a good deal at one time and another, in different languages I chanced to know. It is just the same in all languages. **The Bible**—there is nothing to compare with it in all our sacred books for goodness and purity and holiness and love, and for motives of action.

"Where did the English-speaking people get all their intelligence, and energy, and cleverness, and power? It is their Bible that gives it to them. And now they bring it to us and say, 'This is what raised us; take it and raise yourselves.' They do not force it upon us, as the Mohammedans did with their Koran, but they bring it in, love, and translate it into our languages, and lay it before us, and say, 'Look at me; read it; examine it, and see if it is not good.' Of one thing I am convinced: do what we will, oppose it as we may, it is the Christians' Bible that will, sooner or later, work the regeneration of this land."

The most unique feature of the recent Federal Council was the fact that the papers to be presented to that body by men eminent in the several lines discussed were not fully presented in the conference. All were prepared beforehand, printed in a pamphlet, and each writer presented his special conclusions or recommendation and was allowed ten minutes in which to do this.